The precursors of the Romanian state

At the beginning of the 19th century, a state comprising all the Romanian population inhabiting the territory of present-day Romania did not yet exist: Wallachia (in the south) and Moldavia (in the east) were under Ottoman sovereignty; Dobruja (in the southeast) was a province of the Ottoman Empire; Transylvania (in the centre), Banat (in the southwest), Partium (in the northwest) and Bukovina (in the northwest of Moldavia) belonged to the Habsburg Empire; and Bessarabia (the eastern part of Moldavia) was annexed by Russia in 1812. The basis of the Romanian state was laid in 1859 through the union of Moldavia and Wallachia, which was possible as a consequence of the Ottoman Empire’s decline that had started at the end of the 17th century after the defeat in the Great Turkish War (1683–99) against the Holy League.
The birth of Romania

The institutional and administrative unification of Moldavia and Wallachia under the same ruler, with the recognition of the Ottoman Empire, was achieved by the Romanian political elite between 1859 and 1861. Several years later the next important objective, the independence of the new state, which was called Romania, was also attained. Then, at the beginning of the 20th century a consolidated Romania, which had become a kingdom in 1881, added to its territory southern Dobruja, which belonged to Bulgaria, after getting involved in the second Balkan War. Finally, the creation of Romania was completed after World War I, when the provinces of Banat, Bukovina, Transylvania, Partium and Bessarabia united with the Romanian Kingdom following the disintegration of Austro-Hungary and tsarist Russia.